

Former Middle School Teacher Pleads Guilty to Raping Student

Other defendants face prison time for strangulation, weapon, drug, robbery, and assault charges.

Deputy Attorneys General John Downs and Phillip Casale secured a plea from Gary Smith, 44, of Newark, to Sexual Abuse by a Person in Position of Trust, Authority or Supervision, 1st Degree and two counts of Rape Fourth Degree. While employed as the Choir Director at H.B. DuPont School in Hockessin, Smith repeatedly raped a student over a two-year period. Smith will be sentenced in Superior Court in December, and faces 15 years to life in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Cari Chapman obtained a prison sentence for Sergio Sanchez-Sanchez, 25, of Newark. In December 2015, Sanchez went to his former girlfriend's apartment to deliver Christmas presents, despite the existence of a Protection From Abuse order against Sanchez, and a no contact order between Sanchez and the victim. The two started to argue, and Sanchez punched, bit, and strangled the woman. Sanchez pled guilty in June to Criminal Contempt of a Domestic Violence Protective Order and Strangulation. He was sentenced by Judge Calvin Scott, Jr. to 15 months in prison, followed by one year of probation. Sanchez was also ordered to have no contact with the victim and victim's minor child, and he will be held pending deportation proceedings.

A 25-year-old Wilmington man will spend 42 years in prison after being sentenced as a habitual offender in New Castle County Superior Court. In November 2015, officers from Operation Safe Streets executed a search warrant in Isaiah Palmer's home in the 300 block of West 29th Street in

Wilmington, and found weapons, ammunition, and over 20 grams of heroin. Palmer, prohibited from having a gun because of a previous felony conviction, was found guilty in July after a jury trial of Aggravated Possession of Heroin, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and Possession of Ammunition by a Person Prohibited. Palmer has a history of drug and weapons offenses. Deputy Attorneys General John Taylor and Joe Grubb prosecuted the case.

Deputy Attorney General Christina Kontis secured a plea from 35-year old Robert Coates of New Castle, to Robbery First Degree, Robbery Second Degree and Attempted Theft of a Motor Vehicle. In March 2016, Coates robbed the 7-11 store in the 200 block of Christiana Road in New Castle, pulling a gun on the clerk and demanding money before leaving the store. Two days later, several witnesses noticed him tampering with a car outside of a home in the unit block of West 3rd Street in New Castle. Police arrived as he was dismantling the ignition system, but Coates was able to get away. Later in the week, Coates robbed the Express Food Market in the 700 block of Pulaski Highway in Bear at gunpoint. Coates agreed that he is subject to habitual offender sentencing and faces a minimum of 25 years in prison when sentenced in Superior Court in December.

Deputy Attorney General Phillip Casale secured a prison sentence for William Winchester, 47, of Wilmington, in connection with two bank robberies. In November 2015, Winchester went into the M&T Bank branch in the 1200 block of North Union Street in Wilmington, and gave the teller a note indicating he had a gun. He received an undisclosed amount of cash and left the bank. A few days later, he provided a similar note to a teller at the WSFS branch inside the Safeway supermarket at Foulk and Naamans Roads in North Wilmington. In June, Winchester pled guilty to Robbery First Degree, Robbery Second Degree, and a violation of his probation related to a

prior robbery conviction. Winchester was declared a habitual offender for the second time and sentenced by Judge Paul R. Wallace to 25 years in prison, followed by two and a half years of decreasing levels of supervision.

Deputy Attorney General Sonia Augusthy secured a prison sentence for Jerald Pastro, 20, of Newark, for his role in a burglary and assault case. In March 2015, Pastro and another man went into the Newark home of an acquaintance, stabbing him in the head. Pastro pled guilty in July to Assault Second Degree, Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony, and Burglary First Degree. Pastro was sentenced by Judge Richard Cooch to eight years in prison, followed by six months of either home confinement or work release, then two years of probation.